

greatest gift was to make each person he spoke with feel special.

Our thoughts are with Bud's family: his wife Dalia; children Jamie and Rob, along with his wife Donna; sisters Barbara and Susan and their husbands George and Len; grandchildren Rebecca and Erica; two great grandchildren; nieces and nephews and many friends who were part of the extended family.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in remembering a great friend and outstanding individual, Jacob "Bud" Blitzer.

TRIBUTE TO THE LADY BULLDOGS

HON. BARON P. HILL

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. HILL of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Women's Basketball Team from New Albany High School. The Lady Bulldogs won the Indiana High School Athletic Association class 4A basketball championship last Saturday, completing a perfect season.

Congratulations go out to the entire team: Catrina Wilson, Jessica Dablow, Maria Rickards, Abigail Scharlow, Jessica Huggins, Kennitra Johnson, Erin Wall, Amanda Sizemore, Lacy Farris, Noreen Cousins, Andrea Holbrook, Regina Marshall, Brittany Williams, and Jihan Huggins.

I also wish to congratulate: the team's coach Angie Hinton, her assistant coaches Denise Parrish, Paul Hamilton, Joe Hinton and Katie Myers, team trainer Russ Cook, student manager Melissa Fisher, the athletic director at New Albany Don Unruh, and school principal Steve Sipes.

The Lady Bulldogs are the pride of southern Indiana. I join their families, friends, classmates and community in celebrating their great accomplishment.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF NEW RESEARCH SUPPORTING THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of new research supporting the benefits of music education.

The arts as an academic discipline have long been seen as an essential component of education. Recent scientific studies confirm what teachers of old have always known—music and the other arts stimulate higher brain function. Music education has been shown to elevate test scores in other subjects, particularly math. The Statement of Principles is an important document; it outlines seven basic concepts that, if followed, will maximize the benefits of arts education for all children. I entered these same Statements into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on September 10 so my colleagues might have a chance to review them.

Mr. Speaker, there is a growing body of research demonstrating a causal link between

the formal study of music and the development of spatial reasoning skills in young children. This past week new research from the University of California at Irvine has underscored this link by showing children who take piano lessons and play with newly designed computer software perform better on tests with fractions and proportional math than students not exposed to the piano lessons.

These findings are especially important when one considers that a grasp of fractions and proportional math is a prerequisite to math at higher levels, and children who do not master these areas of math cannot understand more advanced math critical to high-tech fields.

Music lovers like myself have long promoted music education as a way to inspire creativity, develop discipline, and cultivate an appreciation for the arts. Although we suspected gains in cognitive development, today we have the research to confirm it. I urge my colleagues to review the research and encourage families and educators in their Congressional districts to make music education a priority.

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO DECLARATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE

SPEECH OF

HON. HOWARD P. (BUCK) McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 1999

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 24, which opposes the unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood.

While the goal of achieving peace in the Middle East has long been elusive, we have in recent years seen progress where Israelis and Palestinians have come to the negotiating table to discuss their differences. This negotiating process should continue to be respected as the best means for Israelis and Palestinians to maintain a constructive dialogue on fundamental issues of concern. Unilateral actions that circumvent this process will only prolong potential solutions to the conflicts which have caused great harm to Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Approving the resolution before use today will convey an important message that the United States support continued negotiations as the best means to create lasting peace in a region where so much blood has been shed.

THE PENSION RIGHT TO KNOW ACT

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, do we not have a responsibility to help our constituents understand their benefits? As a large portion of today's population is nearing retirement, employer-sponsored retirement plans have increased in importance. And many people do not understand their benefits. It is an even greater problem when an employer unilaterally changes that plan, and minimal explanation is given.

I have some real concerns in these situations, and I believe we need to help our constituents understand their benefits when they are changed. The Wall Street Journal recently highlighted some of the information disclosure problems when companies change from a traditional pension plan to a cash-balance plan.

One particular situation involved a company who changed their plan and merely informed the employees that a change had occurred. One 49-year-old employee decided to look into this further, because he was thinking about his retirement. He discovered that while he was not going to lose any benefits, he was also not going to accrue any benefits for several years under this new plan. It was only through his efforts to learn more about it that he discovered this.

Now, let me point out that it is not the employer's fault, but the law's. That is why I have joined with Senator MOYNIHAN in introducing companion legislation to correct this problem.

The Pension Right to Know Act, H.R. 1176, will require increased disclosure of information to employees about their pension plan. It would require an explanation to the employee as to how their pension plan will be affected by any plan change. It will require an individual benefit statement for each employee showing how they, in particular, will be affected by this change. For some the change will be beneficial, but for others the change could affect how they plan for the future.

My colleagues, I believe we need to protect our constituents who may be expecting one thing, and then receive something very different. As employers make changes from various retirement plans to cash-balance plans, employees are left not understanding what changes have been made to their retirement plan.

We can help our citizens who are nearing retirement and thinking about their retirement savings program—and we can help them to understand.

Mr. Speaker, let us do what we can to help employees understand their options.

Let us work together. Let us solve this problem, and let us solve it together.

APPRECIATION OF THE HONORABLE IMATA KABUA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, last month I was privileged to travel with the House Resources Congressional Delegation to the Pacific Insular areas. Chairman DON YOUNG should be commended for providing this opportunity to Resource Committee members to educate themselves on the issues that confront the people of Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In this regard our trip was a success and I hope that my colleagues who were fortunate to join the Young CODEL—Rep. DANA ROHRBACHER, Rep. JOHN DOOLITTLE, Rep. COLLIN PETERSON, Rep. KEN CALVERT, Rep. ENI FALEOMAVAEGA and Rep. DONNA CHRISTIAN-CHRISTENSEN—have gained a better understanding of Pacific Insular issues.